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FM AMEMBASSY NDJAMENA
TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 4571
INFO RUCNFUR/DARFUR COLLECTIVE
RUEHTRO/AMEMBASSY TRIPOLI 0342

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 02 NDJAMENA 001327

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LONDON AND PARIS FOR AFRICA WATCHERS

E.O. 12958: DECL: 11/14/2016

TAGS: PGOV PREL PHUM PREF CD

SUBJECT: CHAD IMPOSES STATE OF EMERGENCY

REF: A. NDJAMENA 1276

1B. NDJAMENA 1321

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Classified By: PolOff John O'Leary. Reasons 1.4 (b) & (d)

11. (C) Summary. The Chadian Government has imposed a State of Emergency on eastern, southern, and northern provinces, reportedly to combat rebel activity and to quell inter-ethnic violence. Two ministers were given extraordinary powers at the regional level to control the GOC response to rebels and communal violence. The declaration specifically includes press censorship. The Prime Minister accused Sudan of complicity in the communal violence and called for a robust UN peacekeeping force in Darfur. He also expressed "reservations" about the French Foreign Minister's proposal to place an international force on the Chad-Sudan border. N'Djamena is calm, and the Embassy is operating normally. We have been told informally that diplomatic travel outside of N'Djamena will require permission but have not seen any official communication to this effect. End summary.

12. (U) Following a Council of Ministers meeting on November 13, the Chadian government announced the imposition of a State of Emergency covering the provinces of Ouaddai, Wadifira, Salamat, Moyen Chari, Mandoul, Hadjer Lamis, Tibesti, Borkou, western Ennedi, and the city of N'Djamena. The declaration follows growing and unprecedented Arab-African communal violence along the frontier with Sudan. According to the communique:

"(The) situation shows clearly that the current clashes are part of an overall strategy designed and implemented by the Sudanese government to destabilize Chad. In exporting its Darfur conflict to Chad, Sudan wants to weaken Chad by pitting Chadian communities against each other. This prepares the ground for a large-scale war for which Chadians need to be prepared."

13. (C) The communique also announced the imposition of pre-publication press censorship, including both oral and print media. According to French Ambassador Jean-Pierre Bercot, the GOC included N'Djamena in the list of locations covered by the State of Emergency in order to control press coverage of both the rebellion and the communal conflict. A DAO source confirmed that N'Djamena was included in order to keep the press from inflaming hostile behavior in the capital. The editor of independent newspaper "Notre Temps" advised us this afternoon that GOC security agents had just arrived at his residence and were in the process of searching it. The editor of "Le Temps" (another independent newspaper that has been openly critical of the GOC in the past) reported that censorship had already gone into effect.

According to him, editors of the various papers may refuse to publish for 15 days in order to protest censorship. He believes that international press freedom groups may also protest. The Prefet of Goz-Beida reportedly expelled a Radio France International correspondent yesterday from the prefecture.

¶4. (C) In conjunction with the State of Emergency, the cabinet appointed two ministers to remain in the eastern provinces to give enhanced direction to the GOC's efforts to quell rebel movements and inter-communal violence. According to a DAO source, the government was concerned that local administrators did not have the authority and prestige required to marshal military assets to meet emerging threats. By putting ministers reporting directly to the Prime Minister and the President in the field, the government hopes to ensure a response to reports of trouble and to cut down its response time. According to the same source, the government has also distributed Thuraya satellite phones to key villagers in the East to provide timely information to Chadian authorities about communal violence. (The phones, no doubt, will also be used to report on rebel movements.)

¶5. (U) Following yesterday's announcement of the State of Emergency, Prime Minister Pascal Yoadimnadji reportedly met with various Chadian political, religious, and civil society leaders and warned them to prepare for an expanded conflict perpetrated by the government of Sudan.

¶6. (U) In an address to the diplomatic corps this afternoon (10/14), the Prime Minister accused the Sudanese government of complicity in the communal fighting: "The Sudanese government...recruits, arms, and maintains mercenaries on its payroll in order to destabilize our country (Chad)." He went on to state: "The Chadian government will use all means to guarantee the territorial integrity of Chad, its sovereignty and its independence and to ensure the security of the Chadian people."

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¶7. (U) The Prime Minister made the following appeal to the diplomatic corps:

"The Chadian government calls one more time upon the international community (United Nations, African Union, CENSAD) to accept its responsibilities in the face of this enterprise to destabilize Chad, by putting Blue Hats under United Nations mandate into Darfur."

"We forcefully reaffirm this position because we remain convinced that only the presence of United Nations forces can permit the restoration of peace and security in Darfur and allow the refugees to return to their country."

¶8. (U) The Prime Minister noted that the French Foreign Minister yesterday in Sudan had proposed the deployment of an international force on the Chad-Sudan border, as well as on the CAR-Sudan border. The PM stated: "(The French) not having discussed the details of this proposal (with the Chadian government), the (Chadian) government expresses its most explicit reservations about this subject."

¶9. (C) Yesterday, the Chadian government refused to permit the Ambassador to take a day trip to Abeche, although it did permit other official Americans to travel there. The foreign ministry's director of protocol has now verbally informed us that all diplomats are restricted to N'Djamena unless the foreign ministry gives express authorization to travel. Protocol stated that these restrictions are required in order to assure the safety of the diplomatic community.

¶10. (C) RSO police sources indicate that they are concerned about ethnic flare-ups in N'Djamena in response to the communal fighting in the East. Increased military and police patrols, as well as static checkpoints, are a possibility in

N'Djamena, although no apparent increase has yet been noted.

¶11. (C) N'Djamena remains quiet, and residents are going about their business. The Embassy is operating normally but held an EAC meeting in response to the State of Emergency declaration (septel). The American and French schools remain open.

¶12. (C) Comment. The Prime Minister explicitly called upon the UN to place a military force in Sudan, but he made no mention of placing one in Chad. This distinction is in line with Foreign Minister Allam-mi's statement to the Ambassador that the Chadians want only a UN civilian presence (e.g., gendarmes) on the Chadian side to protect the refugee camps and to monitor the border with Sudan (reftel A). End comment.

¶13. (U) Tripoli minimize considered.
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